

REMEDY FOR LOCK-JAW.

A Marvelous Cure Effected by the Use of a Brazilian Drug by Dr. Wheeler.

An Accidental Discovery Which May Prove to be the Greatest of the Age.

Brain Used to Poison Arrows, and its Use by a Savage Medicine Man—Chas. Reynolds's Case.

The peculiar smile that is sometimes seen spreading over the faces of those who have been bodily injured, says a New York letter, is often taken by inexperienced persons to indicate that the mental condition of the patient is unclouded and the body free from pain, but to the eye of the expert physician it appears in a totally different light. The more pronounced and fixed the smile, the more grave will the face of the attending physician become, for the expression is not the natural one of mirth, but is the result of involuntary muscular contraction. Soon the patient's body will be racked by the most terrible spasms, the smile will become a hideous, demoniac grin, and the patient will have tetanus or lockjaw.

The mortality of this disease is appalling. From time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary nearly every record of tetanus at the end tells of the death of the patient. For hundreds of years physicians have stood helpless in the presence of this terrible disease, and have wrung their hands in despair over the complete failure of drugs to control the nervous and muscular force. It is believed by experts that there is a specific either in the natural state or in combinations for every disease, and it only remains for men to discover them to populate the world with healthy people. There are so many minds turned in this direction that the results are easily understood, namely, even when almost the same things are done, are frequently conflicting, but this does not interfere with a general average progress, and every age establishes some great truth in medicine by which mankind is directly benefited. Tetanus and its cure occupies a prominent place in medical circles here at present for the reason that Dr. Wheeler has cured an obstinate case with a remedy brought him from Brazil.

According to Dr. Wheeler, the discovery of the use of the drug was entirely accidental, and he does not take the credit for it all, but prefers rather to give it to Allokia, a darkey native of a Brazilian jungle, one of the wise men of an Indian race who, though living in the deepest shades of intellectual darkness, has been able to do as much and more for the human race than the most expert physicians of the world. If further experience should prove that this drug is an absolute cure for tetanus, the name of the unknown Allokia will go blazing down into history with a fame achieved by few. Dr. Wheeler, while traveling in Brazil, came across a little village that was the center of great excitement. Something unusual had happened, or was going to happen, and the doctor had feared that the demonstration had for its object the transformation of his body into stinks and cutlets. He was speedily reassured when an unarmed messenger came to welcome him to the village. There he found that the son of the chief ruler of the tribe, who had previously broken his leg by a fall was suffering from tetanus. According to the belief of the natives the evil spirit had got hold of the boy, and as the leg was ugly naturally, the grin of his face and the violence of the convulsions were sufficient for the belief that he was possessed of a thousand devils. Allokia had charge of the boy and sat patiently by his side until an Indian came in on the full run with an arm full of vegetables. Then Allokia changed his mood with the speed of light and in a short time had exhausted the juice of the vines and had mixed them together. A small cut having been made in the boy's arm, the juice was rubbed into it. No attention seemed to be paid to the quantity used, and the rubbing was kept up until there were marked signs of respiratory interference. Everybody then danced and yelled, as it was considered that the boy's life had been saved. Dr. Wheeler, smiling at the conspiracy of belief and quietly waited for the boy to die. Instead of seeing the lad die, Dr. Wheeler observed that the convulsions gradually became less frequent and violent and finally disappeared altogether. The boy was cured. After a patient investigation, Dr. Wheeler learned that the drug used by Allokia was urari, which is a combination of vegetable substances used for poisoning arrows. He got a small quantity of the drug from Allokia, who was loath to part with it. The poisonous property of the compound comes from the strichous vine, and this is mixed with pepper, cocculus and other acrid plants which aid its effect. The poisonous principle is permanent, and an arrow which has been dipped in urari will kill after many years as certainly as if it was lately applied. Dr. Wheeler called in consultation in the case of Charles Reynolds at the Charity hospital, a young man who had cracked the bottom of his foot by dancing with a pair of tight shoes and set up a festering wound which resulted in lockjaw. When Dr. Wheeler first saw the patient he was in an exhausted condition, having had the spasms for fully twenty-four hours. The jaws were firmly closed, the head was drawn backward so that it nearly touched the spine, and the trunk was as hard and as rigid as a block of wood. When the spasms came on in full force the strain upon the abdominal muscles was so great that they vibrated like the strings of a fiddle when touched and it seemed as if they would break. The toes were turned up so that they nearly touched the upper part of the foot. A piece of the tongue had been bitten off in the first spasm, and the wound imparted an unbearable stench to the breath. No one who has not seen the agony suffered by a person with tetanus can imagine what his patient had to bear, and it was painful to witness it.

Nicotine, chloral hydrate, calabar bean, camphor and morphia were given in large quantities, but without any apparent effect. Dr. Wheeler, although but little is known of the effect of urari upon the human being, determined that, under the circumstances, he would be justified in using the drug. Death had already stamped its mark on Reynolds's face, when one-tenth of a grain of urari was injected into his arm hypodermically. This had no effect apparently. The spasms continued to come on about every three minutes. The dose was increased to a grain, then five grains and up to ten grains. This amount, spread around on arrows, would kill an army, but it only diminished the spasms to one in twenty minutes. The use of the urari was persisted in, and in twenty-four hours ninety-eight grains had been given, with the remarkable result that the spasms had been reduced to one in three hours, and the patient had fallen asleep, something never heard of in tetanus. The urari was diminished as the symptoms abated, but its use was continued for five days, when there was not even the slightest trembling of the muscles left. There was only one drawback during the case and that was the partial paralysis of the respiratory organs, the usual method of death from urari, but after a few hours of artificial respiration and stimulation this disappeared. The patient left the hospital last week perfectly cured. Much remains

to be learned about urari and the proper method of administration, quantity, etc., and it may be found to be of use in other diseases where the motor nerves require treatment.

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